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"REVIEWS"
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DEATH AND LIFE: AN AMERICAN THEOLOGY, by Arthur C. McGill. Ed. by Charles A. Wilson and Per Anderson. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987. Pp. 109. $7.95 (paper).

This book is a posthumous reconstruction of a set of lectures given by McGill at the St. Olaf College Summer Theology Conference in 1974. McGill died in 1980. Only a few references to events of the early 1970s betray the fact that the lectures occurred over a decade ago. The questions he raises are important for believers of any age. The images he uses are today's. And, important for any theology in any time, the answers he comes to are thoroughly biblical.

As McGill sees it, we Americans try to find life by denying, hiding from, resisting, ignoring and doing everything we can do to escape death. The image he uses for this pursuit of life in order to escape death is "the bronze person." It fits. Think of today's ubiquitous tanning parlors. The bronze person's appearance is "so clean, so neat, so tanned, so buoyant and assured" (26). What does not appear is just as important. In those bronze persons, in us, McGill sees no fear, no recognition or acknowledgement of death. He has no idea "where they carry their nightmares, their savagery, their decay and madness, their grief for all the suffering in the world" (26). The faces and walks of bronze people show no such unpleasantness. Such things don't fit the bronze vision: "enthusiastic, dedicated, succeeding and expecting to go on approximately forever" (26).

The problem, the big black fly in the ointment, is that in spite of our best efforts to the contrary, we do know and never are quite able to forget death's constant presence in life. All you have to do is something so routine and normal as picking up a newspaper. And there, right next to bronze person in the big department store's ad, is "the daily dose of highway accidents and other disasters...situations that stand totally opposed to the bronze people's world" (27). In spite of our bronzed efforts, we know the truth of these daily doses. We know that death is a powerful lord. We know we won't escape him either, even though we try so hard to pretend to do so.

McGill never analyses our way of life abstractly. By his references to things we all see and do and by his cogent images, McGill quickly makes you see yourself in his writing.

So where does McGill seek life? His answer, his very biblical answer, is *death.* In three chapters relying largely on pericopes from Romans and the Gospels of John and Luke, McGill engagingly shows how death is the way to the life we bronzed Americans so energetically seek.

Using Romans 6, and all the while compellingly weaving in his images of American life, McGill says that "in Christ, the transformation of the self involves death." Considered here are the new identity in Christ in Romans 6, christology, sin, discipleship and the resurrection. That is a lot to cover in one chapter, but McGill manages it, managing to make his points well without treating them too lightly or heavy-handedly.

In the next two chapters McGill makes it clear that the context and purpose of life are much larger than the self. Chapter Four, "In Christ, the Worship of the Father Involves—Death," points at life's true context, namely, God. Using John 12:20-33, the author uses the image of a

seed to understand God. A seed's power is its dying to produce new life. God's power is in the act of Jesus' dying to give new life. Christians then worship not God's absoluteness, but instead the "fecundity of God...who not only engenders the Son, but engenders in all of us the same life" (74-75).

The book's last chapter demands a redirection of our lives. McGill says that "life is the generation of life." That happens

when, as the chapter is entitled, "In Christ the Love of the Neighbor Involves-Death." Here, Luke's account of the Good Samaritan is the scriptural soil for McGill's ideas. He focuses on neediness as that which makes possible both what we receive and what we give. He does a nice job of pointing out how allergic we generally are to neediness, although neediness is the key to life in the Kingdom of God.

In a rather sharp section about the church, McGill looks at "Bronze Love in the Church." "They [the churches] ignore the fact that love is self-expenditure, a real expending, a real deterioration of the self" (87). The Church too often gives the "childish impression" that we can "meet everybody's needs and still have everything we need for ourselves" (88). Does that sound at all familiar?

While reading the book, I found myself thinking that it felt like the statement of a person's life, the concise and well put summation of one's life thought. Occasionally, something did not quite seem to fit—McGill reached for a little too much or an idea seemed a bit tangential. But such things are rare, and in no way detract from the book as a whole. Not many books, not even much longer ones, say as much, as well.

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BETWEEN FAITH AND CRITICISM: EVANGELICALS, SCHOLARSHIP, AND THE BIBLE IN AMERICA, by Mark A. Noll. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986. Pp. 288. $19.95.

Between Faith and Criticism is the first in a series of volumes commissioned by the Society of Biblical Literature to examine biblical scholarship in America under the rubric of confessional variety. If the volumes to come are of the same caliber as this one by Mark Noll on the Evangelicals, the series may well become a landmark in American religious historiography. This is a remarkable book, indeed.

The story Noll tells is, in broad outline, well known to students of the American religious past. It traces the emergence of a sophisticated conservative approach to biblical interpretation during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, the emergence of Fundamentalism after World War I, the decline of conservative biblical scholarship in the same years, and the reappearance of intellectual rigor in the last several decades. Simply to have told this story in one place and to do it as well as Noll has, would have been noteworthy in itself. But Noll has done more than that. He has enriched our knowledge of this history through his mastery of its substance and he has come to intellectual terms with his findings.

The strength of this book grows out of its author's command of the primary sources. Ample documentation makes it plain that the author has covered his assigned ground thoroughly. The results of this appear in his rich documentation, detailed reporting, and very careful generalizations. What Noll has to say about the way Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield accommodated himself to theistic evolution and about the use A. H. Strong and Edgar Young Mullins made of personalist philosophy may, for example, require some readers to qualify what they have thought about conservative Presbyterian and Baptist biblical scholarship. Similarly, Noll's attention to the importance of the work of conservative British scholars for their American counterparts and his attention to the influence of Dutch-American contributions to the Evangelical enterprise will give other readers new food for thought—as will his discussion of biblical scholarship in the context of the history of American academic life. It will, one suspects, be difficult for most readers to put *Between Faith and Criticism* down without thinking this whole story through freshly and abandoning one or another caricature or stereotype.

Huge theological questions lurk in the pages of *Between Faith and Criticism,* and its author is well aware of them. Evangelicals lack, he argues in the opening pages of his book, a "theology of criticism." Noll returns to this criticism in final chapters, one of them appearing under the telling title, "Contemporary Uncertainties." After describing the extraordinary renaissance of biblical scholarship among contemporary Evangelicals, he

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proposes the possibility of a "believing criticism " compatible with evangelical convictions, and suggests that this will require not only a more disciplined and liberal use of the techniques of contemporary scholarship but also a self-conscious reckoning with questions of hermeneutics. What this might mean for Evangelicals is, of course, not clear. It however, the Evangelical renaissance in biblical scholarship continues, it will be as difficult for these as for scholars of other persuasions to circumvent the challenges Noll describes.

Historians and biblical scholars will have their own particular uses for this finely nuanced book. But everyone who cares about the interpretation of the Bible will profit from reading it. An erudite and wonderfully readable piece of history, it is also alive with provocative theological questions no reader of the Bible can ignore.

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ERRAND TO THE WORLD: AMERICAN PROTESTANT THOUGHT AND FOREIGN MISSIONS, by William R. Hutchinson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Pp. 227. $24.95.

EVANGELICALS ON THE CANTERBURY TRAIL: WHY EVANGELICALS ARE ATTRACTED TO THE LITURGICAL CHURCH, by Robert E. Webber. Waco, TX: Word, 1985. Pp. 174. $13.95 (paper).

CELEBRATING OUR FAITH: EVANGELISM THROUGH WORSHIP, by Robert Webber. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986. Pp. 128. $11.95.

In the decades which will bracket the new century's turn, the central task of American consciousness will be to come to terms with the loss of the American *imperium.*

Although some bellicosely resist it and Reaganites optimistically deny it, the irresistible fact is that America is no longer the central director/player on the world's stage. The U.S. cannot and will not be allowed simply to write the script or effectively direct the cast. Perhaps the U.S.'s new role will be the more modest one of dramaturge and prompter for a cast which has strong and diverse ideas of how and what the play should be. It remains to be seen what incriminations, retrograde enthusiasms and atavistic passions we will experience as our consciousness reluctantly adjusts to a changed world.

The mainline denominations, long blissfully oblivious to their acquisition of half-lives, are awakening to similar tasks. If not "side-track," the "mainline" denominations [henceforth "ecumenical," following Hutchinson] are awakening to the frightful, unexpected realization that they are not on the main line of American life. Now neither the title, *Christian Century,* nor the word 'mainline' can be seen without irony and a nostalgic twinge.

The "ecumenical" churches no longer carry the bulk of religious life in America, nor do their political and economic pronouncements provide more than an unsolicited endorsement of proposals created and instantiated elsewhere. (When was a delegate to a synod convention last solicited by a Democratic lobbyist?)

While secular American society has come of age, becoming benignly indifferent to religious forms, the ecumenical churches have been outflanked on the other side by the evangelical and fundamentalist efflorescence of the last thirty years. No longer needed as the establishment's *factotum,* and dwindling as providers of religious services, the ecumenical churches look to a period of readjustment of identity and questioning of mission.

The three books considered here shed some light and provide some hope. Hutchinson's fine survey of American thinking about foreign missions shows that the themes of the present ("pure" Gospel proclamation vs. civilizing mission; proselytizing vs. mutual appreciation; expatriates vs. nationals; liberals vs. conservatives vs. moderates) have endured from the Colonial Period. The question of Christ and culture has dominated the discussion. The initial failure internally

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and abroad to present Christ without culture was in large followed by an American activism which affirmed both the evangel and the civilizing mission.

The third phase in the ecumenical churches' missions was exemplified in the *Layman's Report* of 1932. It saw a fundamental shift toward the missionary as ambassador, toward communication and regard between faiths, and toward autonomous humanitarian service by "experts" who could bring to developing nations what was brightest and best from Western civilization.

Numbers, Hutchinson warns, present only a fragment of the story, but are nevertheless telling. The ten-to-one numerical preponderance of ecumenically-related protestant missionaries to other protestant missionaries in the 1930s has now been more than reversed. Two-thirds of the 70% ecumenical decline can be accounted for by the withdrawal of missionary organizations from the World and National Councils.

What has developed, though, is not a bifurcated Protestant missionary world, but a

trifurcated one. The old “mainline” missions position, sensitive to issues of culture and committed to “contextualization,” is now occupied by a new mainline comprised of evangelicals affiliated with the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association. The nonaffiliated, largely fundamentalist missions societies show phenomenal growth (from 7,000 missionaries in 1960 to 17,000 in 1980) and occupy the right wing. The ecumenicals, generally withdrawing from mission activities, claim the left wing but speak (however loudly) to a constituency which has largely eschewed concerns for evangelism other than the traditional church-building foreign missions. Hutchinson, Professor of the History of Religion at Harvard, concludes that by 1980, the American foreign mission movement, “if it had not come to an end, surely had come under revised management” (202).

If the future of American foreign missions lies with evangelicals and fundamentalists, many observers believe that the future of American Protestant life lies with those who can speak of their faith in the first-person singular.

Robert Webber, Professor of Historical Theology at Wheaton College (Illinois), has produced a long and interesting string of books illuminating his evangelical faith and liturgical passions. In *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail,* he and six others tell how their faith found form and fulfillment through connection with the Episcopal Church. These pilgrims came to Canterbury not out of rejection of their pasts but from a desire for a richer context (liturgy, mystery, history, tradition, and ecclesial sense).

The future of the church, Webber believes, properly lies in the convergence of the evangelical and catholic traditions. In *Celebrating Our Faith,* Webber ironically argues for the restoration of Third Century liturgical evangelism. It is a call into a conversion regulated and ordered by worship, articulated both communally and privately, and spoken in all persons, plural and singular.

Celebrating Our Faith deserves particular attention by all concerned about how ecumenical churches are to speak to and relate to our new cultural situation. The book speaks with personal passion, historical insight, and new vision.

Hutchinson’s splendid book not only provides a sweeping picture of the American theologies of foreign mission but helps ask questions that wonderfully concentrate the mind. Webber opens windows to new life-forms which promise that the future may be more rich, diverse and faithful than fearful reaction would allow us to imagine.

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THE MIGHTY FROM THEIR THRONES, by James P. M. Walsh. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987. Pp. xv + 206. $12.95 (paper).

Walsh has made an important contribution to biblical scholarship in *The Mighty from Their Thrones.* The concept of power as it is found in the biblical material has long been pointed to and used as away of addressing the issue of power in contemporary church and society. What Walsh does is to provide us with a wealth of information with a biblical focus. In some

ways, this book is quite radical. The Hebrew concepts which the author uses throughout are familiar and accessible to biblical scholars. However, Walsh departs from commonly held definitions and provides some startlingly fresh insights.

Fundamental to his discussion on power are the concepts *sedeq* and *mišpat*. While Walsh consciously does not provide a lengthy word-study on these concepts, the way in which he reinterprets and uses them points to a radical shift in approach. If Walsh's main interest is in providing a word-study, then an important critique at this point would be the lack of a comprehensive study in terms of the occurrences of *sedeq* and *mišpat* in the Hebrew Bible. But that is not his interest. He sees these concepts as fundamental to Israel's existence, an existence which is distinctively political. Walsh thus departs from the view that *sedeq* and *mišpat* are particularly religious concepts.

Using these concepts as his foundation Walsh then provides a discussion which begins in Canaan, discussing at length Israelite origins (Exodus, "conquest"), and ends in the New Testament.

In this vast panoramic sweep, he argues that the premier point of departure for the understanding of the existence of God's people is the political activity of God. God acts on behalf of his people because whether in Canaan or in the time of Jesus, the common bond which characterizes God's people is powerlessness. Thus, when the "Song of Deborah" (5:11a) speaks of *Sidqot Yahweh,* Walsh views it as Yahweh razing the thrones of the powerful, using the powerless (peasantry) to do it. Together with the "Song of Deborah," Walsh uses the "Song of Hannah" and the "Oracles of Balaam" as paradigmatic of Israel's self-understanding as the people of Yahweh. The fundamental point of note in these poems is Yahweh's chief concern, namely, the freeing of his people from oppression.

In Israel, it is only Yahweh who has final authority and only in Yahweh's *sedeq* can Israel survive as a people. "Israel was a political entity whose life as a people was made possible by a 'decentralized' form of politics. There was no permanent central authority and no privileged class" (84). For Israel to rely on its own *sedeq* is to rebel against Yahweh. In any enterprise concerning the existence of Israel, it is always Yahweh who is the subject of this existence. All that is expected of Israel is that they be "still" (Ex. 14:13-14).

This view of Israel spills over into New Testament times. The New Testament in general, and Jesus in particular, is to be understood only in the light of Yahweh's *sedeq* and *mišpat.* Given the fact that *sedeq* and *mišpat* are seen as political terms, Walsh says, "The 'new' understanding of Kingdom and Messiah and New Creation does not come from an abandonment of political concerns. At its heart is the old, very political question of *sedeq* and *mišpat.*"

And how are these traditions applied to us? It is clear, according to Walsh, that if the contemporary church seeks to be in touch with the heart of the biblical message, then "'only in needfulness, powerlessness, and...unrighteousness' [lack of our own righteousness], do we see the salvation of our God" (177).

In the discussion of subjects such as "power" and "justice" by church and society, Walsh's book will have to be reckoned with, whether one is willing to accept his thesis or not. He has brought to our attention a neglected direction of biblical study. His insistence that theology and politics cannot be separated, let alone be made to be exclusive of each other, must be brought to bear on the hermeneutical task which continually confronts us.

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PLURALITY AND AMBIGUITY: HERMENEUTICS, RELIGION AND HOPE, by David Tracy. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987. Pp. xii + 148. $15.95.

The theme of this book is conversation. Tracy sees conversation as a strategy against that fatal self-centeredness which treats anything alien as untrue or impossible—against that sameness in which it no longer occurs to anyone to question the official versions of texts or history. The goal is a more fragile, Reality-centered self capable of imagining the different as possible. Tracy developed his

model of conversation in his previous book, *The Analogical Imagination.* But in a time when whole communities are silenced, the viability of conversation as an effective strategy of resistance is in peril. What if the supposedly free movement of conversation were only a cover for the supposedly free market? Or what if conversation is only a play of signifiers which does not engage history at all? In the face of troubling questions like these, a theologian who fundamentally trusts conversation as Tracy does must squarely face the plurality and ambiguity of language so as to protect conversation from being too easily co-opted. This is what Tracy does in his new book, *Plurality and Ambiguity.*

The first chapter reviews and develops his understanding of conversation as a model of interpretation, while the second is devoted to method, explanation and theory in relation to that model. Basically, conversation is the exploring of possibilities through the back and forth movement of inquiry controlled by the question itself. In following this line of questioning, truth manifests itself and the questioner recognizes it analogically as similarity in difference. Arguments, critical theories or methods are given an important role within conversation but are never allowed to replace it or to arbitrate from outside. Truth as disclosure and recognition remains the final framework within which other models of truth such as coherence and correspondence can be appropriated.

The third chapter is entitled “Radical Plurality: The Question of Language.” Here Tracy takes aim at the mistaken notion that language is a neutral and ahistorical tool for expressing pre-linguistic feelings or extra-linguistic facts. To exorcize the myth that autonomous egos control language he takes the reader on a tour of four philosophers. Wittgenstein’s discovery of multiple language games, including “the games of certitude that every culture uses for its most basic beliefs” deals the first blow. Heidegger deals the second: language cannot grasp full presence or clarity because in every historical disclosure there is also a withdrawal or concealment of meaning. De Saussure’s description of language as a system of contrasting arbitrary signs further erodes the link between world and word, but it again raises the hope that language can be mastered, this time as a finite system of signs abstracted from history. Jacques Derrida ends this structuralist hope by radicalizing the second half of de Saussure’s formulation, “In the linguistic system there are *only differences.*” In the contrast of signifiers meaning is endlessly deferred and can never be captured in a closed system. But as in de Saussure’s theory, Derrida’s linguistic

signifiers still play above history and thus conceal the moral ambiguity of the supposedly deconstructed subject. Tracy resists those implications of Derrida's work which might undermine historically responsible conversation and then moves through all four theorists to a chastened interpretation of discourse.

The message of the fourth chapter, "Radical Ambiguity: The Question of History," is this: there are no innocent interpreters or innocent texts because language itself is not innocent. In learning language we acquire a morally ambiguous history (e.g., the phallocentric history we learn through English pronouns).In being formed by the classics we are also formed by the barbarity in their history of effects. And since these moral ambiguities hide themselves in the very language of our questioning, conversation can be co-opted: "the return of the same 'becomes' a return to policies of exclusion and repression." But for Tracy, there is also grace in language and history: "a power interrupting our constant temptations to delude ourselves...a power gradually but really transforming old habits" (75). Therefore, Tracy can still urge his readers to trust conversation. But they are forewarned to converse with their eyes open—to be hopeful yet vigilant—ready to resist seductive distortions even in cherished texts or rightly privileged interpreters like the oppressed. For the best retrievals often come through suspicion, and resistance to classic texts may sometimes be a more appropriate response than recognition. To resist distortion we should avail ourselves of the critical theories, and we should pay special attention to those who have had our dominant interpretations forced upon their histories. But finally, neither the critical theories nor the oppressed are given the last word. Like the linguistic

theorists they function to decenter and chasten the western interpreter, but the task of interpreting cannot be ceded to others. For Tracy, it is only in risking genuine conversation with the oppressed that we really hear them or take them seriously.

The fifth chapter is entitled "Resistance and Hope: The Question of Religion." Despite their ambiguity, Tracy portrays the religions as bearing potent powers of resistance. In the religious classics believers sense the "presence of Ultimate Reality" demanding and empowering a transformation from self-centeredness to reality-centeredness. And for Tracy, this reality-centered piety includes a pluralistic attitude. The great variety one finds in any religious tradition is engendered by the classics themselves, and therefore, when religious leaders attack this plurality they undermine "some central religious power" in the tradition itself. Through the religious classics, God resists "the return of the same" and that is the source of Tracy's hope.

Tracy's defense of conversation in light of the sobering ambiguity of history and language deepens his theology as a whole, and it should go a long way toward clearing up misinterpretations of his work. But inevitably, not all will be satisfied. Those who have been waiting for Tracy to systematically interpret Christian doctrines will have to wait for the companion volume. Those who have been waiting for a fuller exposition of Tracy's ethical or political thought will also not find it here. And for some, this will mean that the verdict on whether conversation is a truly viable strategy of resistance is still out. In dealing with the preconditions and guidelines for good conversation, Tracy has so far dealt mostly with individual interpreters. But especially in the neocolonial context, there are social and legal preconditions which are equally important. I think of the loss of tribal tradition which will occur unless a temporary exclusion of Christian missionaries gives them time to interpret the changing world in

their own terms. I think of those period pieces masquerading as classics in the great museums while out there in the margins classic works of resistance are still excluded from print or gallery as “popular Catholicism,” that is, as popular and anachronistic versions of the great European baroque. Real changes in power relations and legislation are required to create space for conversation—and without these I fear there is less hope. The development of ethical, political and legal policies which could provide room for conversation in a postcolonial context would not be foreign to Tracy’s project because they would not take the place of conversation. Such policies would only strengthen the defense of conversation achieved in this book and would increase hope. In the meantime, I agree with Tracy that we should use all the critical tools at our disposal as aids to conversation and continue to risk interpreting our traditions.

Plurality and Ambiguity is a short book, and this is partly due to a change in style. Digressions or unnecessary clarifications have been severely curtailed. Footnotes are kept to a minimum and the text is free of technical jargon. This opens Tracy’s work to a wider public without loss of scholarly rigor. While the book significantly develops earlier positions, it could also serve as a good introduction to Tracy’s theology.

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LECTIONARY FOR THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE (SERIES A), ed. by Gordon Lathrop and Gail Ramshaw-Schmidt. New York: Pueblo, 1986. Pp. xviii + 266. $15.00.

For anyone, clergy or lay, who proclaims the Word of God from the lectionary readings within the Sunday assembly of worshipers, the *Lectionary for the Christian People* deserves attention. It provides a conservatively emended revision of the *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible for the lectionary (Series A). By employing the RSV as a base it builds on turns of phrase and English usage already familiar in the worship of our churches.

The chief impetus for this emended RSV lectionary is the issue of sexist language. Presently we often hear lectors emending texts in the readings without

careful attention to the original languages or to infelicitous grammatical constructions. There are others who wish to be more inclusive in the readings, but have not discovered a translation which they consider appropriate to the language tradition of their worship. Even those who resist dealing with the issue of sexist language in worship will find this attempt to be worthy of creating second thoughts.

The editors, Gordon Lathrop and Gail Ramshaw-Schmidt, clearly state their principles in a well-written five-page introduction. They are rigorous in their craft and faithful to their articulated principles and they pay careful attention to how it is heard with the ears as well as read by the eyes. A comparison of the readings in the present RSV with the revisions in this lectionary will certainly lead readers to rethink their own practice on Sunday mornings.

However, more inclusive language is not their only contribution. They also add proper names for pronouns to make the readings more specific for listeners. Some changes were made to

make the meaning more clear. Examples are substituting "Jews" for "the circumcized" or "in labor pains" for "in travail." They also change the archaic "thee" and "thou" which RSV uses in direct address of God to "you." As a bonus, the long Passion Sunday gospel and the Good Friday account of the passion of Christ are arranged in the form of dramatic readings. Their conservative bent is evidenced in their retention of Father and Son language for trinitarian titles. While masculine pronouns in reference to Jesus have been reduced by participial constructions and relative clauses, the editors affirm clearly that the incarnation gives a firm rationale for use of masculine language for Christ. In familiar passages they also respect the shape and sound of the text hallowed by repeated use.

While the National Council of Churches lectionary, *An Inclusive Language Lectionary*, was considered by many to be too radical for use in Sunday worship, Lathrop and Ramshaw-Schmidt's work is in my judgment eminently suited for Sunday worship. When you find one of their revised texts unusable for your setting, simply go back to the RSV or another version.

One question is sure to arise. What about those Scripture inserts which have the RSV version or another translation printed? What will be the reaction of worshipers as they follow along word-for-word? If you continue to use those inserts, it could serve as an educational opportunity as long as the congregation knows what you are doing. An alternative is to have worshipers concentrate on listening to the reading rather than burying their faces in the insert. That may even encourage lectors to do a more effective job of proclaiming the lessons in the readings.

You may be hesitant or undecided about some of the editors' solutions. They admit that when some texts are put in the plural ("they" for "he"), directness may be diminished. You may feel loss like I did when John, the Baptist, now says, "Repent, for the dominion of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3). But that is exactly the problem of any translation. Some changes are painful but necessary. And some of the changes we make prove to be right and others will be deemed to be inadequate in retrospect. While you may quarrel with a few solutions, here is a responsible effort to deal with difficult issues.

One further item, its red cover is visually attractive and appropriate for public reading of the Word of God. It certainly is an improvement on the practice of reading from throwaway Scriptures inserts. The bound book expresses the esteem we hold for the Word of God which is proclaimed from this book Sunday after Sunday.

What about Series B and C? The publisher has announced that Series B will be available in the fall and that the same principles used in Series A will be applied to Series B and C. Even if you disagree with a few proposals, this lectionary certainly offers a viable alternative which honors the translation used in most of our churches yet seeks at the same time to address perceived limitations.

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THE NARRATIVE UNITY OF LUKE-ACTS: A LITERARY INTERPRETATION, VOL. 1, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, by Robert Tannehill. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986. Pp. 334. $19.95.

The last decade and a half have witnessed significant shifts in biblical studies. Most striking, perhaps, has been the growing awareness of the art of biblical narrative. In Gospel studies, this has meant focusing on the text not simply as a source of historical information about Jesus or about early Christian piety but as an artful construction. The Gospel's power is related to its narrative shape; the truth to which it testifies cannot be reduced to single sentences.

Not surprisingly, interpreters are becoming increasingly restive with the commentary format, which requires statements about each sentence in a literary work. The format makes it difficult to attend to the larger—and more significant—aspects of interpretation. That is particularly true in the case of Luke-Acts, a literary work in two parts that comprises one-fourth of the entire New Testament. If the most significant and productive interpretive issues have to do with the overall shape and themes of the narrative, it is obvious that ordinary commentary format will be found wanting. There is simply too much material to cover if each sentence must be examined in order. New forms of commentary are required.

One such example is the recent work on Luke-Acts by Robert Tannehill. As the title suggests, he is interested in the narrative unity of Luke's two-part work. The first volume of his "commentary" deals with the Gospel, though Acts is in view throughout. Tannehill has chosen to focus on narrative roles in Luke, organizing the chapters in terms of major characters. Luke's story is about Jesus, but it is about Jesus as he interacts with different people, including the sick, the poor, sinners, the crowd, the authorities, and the disciples. As Tannehill has argued in earlier studies on Mark, the Gospels are interested in characters primarily in terms of their role in the plot, i.e., as players in a great drama. Interpreters must identify the overall dynamic of that drama and then appreciate contributions of the various characters. The main theme of Luke's two volumes, according to Tannehill, is the action of God to save the world. What makes for drama is the persistent resistance to God's action—and God's ability to work in the face of human opposition.

There are many reasons to commend Tannehill's book to students of the New Testament. He writes clearly, without burdening the reader with technical language. He is widely read, both in the area of classic New Testament scholarship and in literary theory. Perhaps most significant, he is a perceptive and sensitive reader of texts. His approach is more productive than some of the more esoteric methods of interpretation, particularly for those engaged with the New Testament for preaching and teaching. Reading is occasionally slow going, but largely because Tannehill is concerned to examine texts with care, showing connections with other passages in the Gospel and Acts. Repetition, or "echo effect" as he terms it, is a major feature of Luke's narrative; noting the connections within the narrative can greatly enhance the reader's appreciation of the story.

One particularly important matter Tannehill addresses is the role of the Jews in Luke-Acts. The question is of considerable interest in recent scholarship, thanks in large measure to the work of Jacob Jervell. Jervell insisted that we reassess Luke's relationship to Israel, arguing that Luke wrote from a vantage point within Israel rather than from outside. Luke wrote, Jervell argued, largely for Jewish believers in Jesus, seeking to demonstrate that despite opposition from within their family and despite the flood of Gentiles that had joined these Jewish believers for worship, God's salvation accomplished in Jesus constituted faithfulness to his promises to Israel. Though Tannehill never mentions Jervell's work in his first volume, its influence is marked as the question about Luke's view of Israel is posed early and is considered regularly within the commentary.

It is perhaps a bit unfair to assess Tannehill's views before his volume on Acts appears,

but at least some preliminary questions are appropriate. Tannehill suggests that in some sense

Luke's work has a tragic quality. The optimistic note about God's redemption of Israel sounded in the birth narratives changes dramatically as Jesus encounters opposition from his own people and is finally rejected by the religious authorities. The apostles, Stephen, and Paul also encounter opposition from segments of the Jews in Acts. Can one then say, with many commentators, that "Israel" rejects the gospel and is thus rejected as God's people? Tannehill backs away from such a statement, since among other things it would imply that the promises of God to Israel, so emphatically stressed in the opening chapters of Luke's Gospel, have failed. The category "tragedy" which Tannehill employs seems unpromising, since it seems to imply failure on God's part. It is possible, as Tannehill suggests following David Tiede, that Acts will not resolve the question but leave it open. That would mean, however, that the major question posed by the narrative—does God keep his word?—still remains in suspense at the end of Acts. If God does not keep his promises to Israel there is no reason to expect God will remain faithful to anyone else. It seems unlikely that the narrative can leave such a major question unresolved, particularly if the story is intended to provide the reader with confidence about "the matters in which you have been instructed" (Luke 1:4). To be fair, however, we must await a definitive answer from Tannehill in his second volume. What should be noted, for those engaged in ministry of various sorts, is that in Tannehill's view a theological question stands at the heart of Luke's literary enterprise. T annehill's scholarship thus clearly engages critical theological questions of significance to pastors.

Though there are many other facets of Luke-Acts that could be explored and alternative ways of structuring such a study, both the form and the substance of Tannehill's narrative commentary offer great promise. Credit must be given to Fortress Press for publishing such a stimulating work in its Foundations and Facets Series. Those who work through Tannehill's study will not be disappointed. And those who read his first volume will expectantly await the second.

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PASTORAL COUNSELING ACROSS CULTURES, by David Augsburger. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986. Pp. 405. $21.95.

The judgment of history could very well point to this book as a pivotal work in the realm of pastoral theology and ministry. Augsburger has combined theological awareness, cultural sensitivity and a global perspective to the discipline of pastoral care. The reader cannot help but be impressed with the breadth of knowledge, the depth of insight and the scope of vision which comes to expression in this book. The author is expertly skilled in raising the consciousness of his readers to the necessity for counseling out of a contextual framework which takes into account diverse world views, cultural values and the idiosyncratic dispositions of various peoples. The white, male, American middle class perspective in pastoral counseling which has

for years held sway is woefully inadequate in addressing the needs of women, people of color and inhabitants of other regions of the earth. This kind of a work may be long overdue, but for anyone who wishes to engage in a ministry which is inclusive and multicultural, this book is an absolute necessity.

The book not only contains a wealth of information in the text, but is replete with graphs, charts, diagrams, anecdotes and stories from various parts of the world which serve to substantiate the concerns which the author is articulating. Each page is packed with important material which stimulates the reader to further reflection on the theology and practice of pastoral care and counseling. It is extremely well written and easy to understand. It presents the reader with critically important insights as the author with great integrity skillfully integrates theology and cultural awareness into the art of pastoral care and counseling.

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Augsburger addresses the impoverished perspective of pastoral care providers who are encapsulated within a myopic cultural framework and who furthermore believe that their own culture and experiences are the norm for all human beings. He suggests that neither sympathy nor empathy suffice, but the counselor must practice interpathy which he defines as,

> ...an intentional cognitive envisioning and affective experiencing of another’s thoughts and feelings, even though the thoughts rise from another process of knowing, the values grow from another frame of moral reasoning and the feelings spring from another basis of assumptions. (29)

Interpathy is particularly difficult for western counselors who operate with a two-tiered world view when dealing with people of other cultures who have a three-tiered world. Augsburger contends that in the western world we operate with the realm of religion and the realm of science. People of other cultures have also a “mesocosmos” which includes in their perception of reality folk religion, psychic and physical phenomena. The western mind has relegated all talk of magic, demons, ghosts and charms to the realm of unenlightened primitive mentality. To discount such concerns ignores an important dimension of that person’s reality and renders counseling ineffective. Mutuality through interpathy is imperative.

“Culture mirrors theology. Theology reflects culture” (71). The intercultural pastoral counselor must develop an adequate anthropology which takes into account that which is universal, that which is culturally conditioned, and that which is uniquely individual. A plea is made to extricate oneself as much as is humanly possible from a posture which is culturally monolithic and to emulate the transcultural ministry of Jesus who was able to cross over the cultural boundaries with conviction without sacrificing his own personal integrity.

Under the rubric of a theology of humanness, Augsburger delineates the critical differences between a sociocentric society and an individuated society. What is helpful and healthful in counseling is determined by the anthropology indigenous to a given people. The social structure determines whether control is exercised primarily internally or externally and the manner in which concomitant responsibility is assigned. Knowledge of social structure and cultural controls is critical if effective counseling is to occur. This leads one to affirm a theology of grace (chapter four) which explicates the distinction between anxiety, shame, and guilt as

primary dynamics of social control. Augsburger contends that each of these three phenomena has positive and negative functions which are critical to the full functioning of the personality.

Chapter five addresses the foundational issue of "values" as determinative corporately for each culture and individually for each person within that society. The pastoral counselor must be conversant with the unique value system which a person brings to life issues. The author compares Amerindian and Anglo value systems by way of illustration. Interpathy is the sine qua non for the pastoral counselor who respects the rights and integrity of individuals who may embrace a variety of value systems while remaining true to the central value of a supreme good who is called God. The concern for value is articulated more specifically in the following chapter dealing with the theology of the family and in chapter seven which deals with a theology of liberation, particularly as it comes to expression in the concern for gender equality.

"A Theology of Moral Character" which concerns itself with ethical issues is the subject of chapter eight. Various cultures are discussed with their respective philosophical dispositions towards teleological, deontological or utilitarian ethics. The issue is not to judge which of these philosophical postures is to be preferred, but to recognize that in varying cultures, varying perspectives hold sway. The pastoral counselor needs to recognize that "No form of counseling or psychotherapy is morally, politically, or culturally neutral" (269). It is important to claim ownership of one's own predisposition while respecting the view of others.

Perhaps most fascinating of all chapters in many respects is chapter nine which concerns itself with a theology of the demonic. It is in this chapter that

Augsburger addresses the concerns which arise out of what he terms the "mesocosmos" which is embraced as reality by much of the world's population. He utilizes illustrative material which comes primarily from Africa to demonstrate the power which this dimension of life brings to bear on people. He suggests an approach which can cooperatively embrace indigenous practices which lead to the health and wholeness of individuals, for we dare not limit either the scope or the realm of God's beneficent work.

The understanding, expression and treatment of what is termed mental illness in various cultures constitutes the subject matter of chapter eleven which Augsburger subsumes under the rubric of a theology of human frailty. He points out the danger inherent in "labeling" people who exhibit certain behaviors. What may be considered as dysfunctional in one culture may be acceptable behavior in another and vice versa. The etiology of evil comes under the theological category of theodicy which might be termed the foundational question of all pastoral theology.

Augsburger concludes his book with a chapter on "Models of Pastoral Counseling" in which he lifts up eleven possible models and metaphors as being descriptive of the counselor's work. Each model has its strengths and limitations. He states in his concluding paragraph,

> We end this study not with the construction of a single integrative model but with the recognition of the need for as many models as there are cultural contexts, and the call for pastoral counselors to work creatively, flexibly, humbly, and redemptively on the boundaries, where crossing over and returning enrich and transform our vision of human life and destiny. (373)

Thus ends this very prodigious work which challenges the reader to heightened consciousness and awareness of the importance of culture and its concomitant social expressions as it affects the pastoral care giver.

This work will not only alter the theory, but also the practice of pastoral care. Accelerated transportation and communication technology coupled with increased mobility and migration has diminished the size of our world. As a result our sisters and brothers throughout the world are closer to us than ever before. It is incumbent upon all people for the sake of peace and unity to more fully understand one another. If we are to perform our role as pastoral care givers and counselors, it is imperative that we adopt interpathy as our methodological approach and attempt as much as it is humanly possible to not only walk in the shoes of our sisters and brothers, but to enter into their thought and feeling world even as they attempt to enter into ours. It is imperative that pastoral care givers and counselors not only read this book, but reflect on it and put into practice the suggestions shared by this author.

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